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DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FOR THE 1990S

Report of the Second Committee (Part IV)*

Rapporteur: Ms. Irene FREUDENSCHUSS-REICHL (Austria)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on item 91 (see A/48/717, para. 2). Action to the taken on sub-item (b) was considered at the 19th and 47th meetings, on 28 October and 10 December. An account of the Committee's consideration of the item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/48/SR.19 and 47).

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS A/C.2/48/L.8 AND L.76

2. At the 19th meeting, on 28 October, the representative of Colombia, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s" (A/C.2/48/L.8), which read as follows:

* The report of the Committee on this agenda item will be issued in several parts under the symbol A/48/717 and addenda.

"Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling its resolutions 45/206 of 21 December 1990, in which it endorsed the Paris Declaration and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, adopted by the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, 46/156 of 19 December 1991 on the implementation of the Programme of Action and 47/173 of 22 December 1992 on the implications of the application of the new criteria for identifying the least developed countries in the implementation of the Programme of Action,

"Recalling also its resolutions S-18/3 of 1 May 1990, the annex to which contains the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular the Revitalization of the Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries, and 45/199 of 21 December 1990, the annex to which contains the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, the document entitled 'A New Partnership for Development: The Cartagena Commitment', 1/ adopted by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development at its eighth session, and the texts adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, particularly Agenda 21, 2/

"Taking note of the declaration adopted at the Ministerial Meeting of the Least Developed Countries, held at United Nations Headquarters on 30 September 1993 in pursuance of the decision taken at the Ministerial Meeting held at Dhaka in February 1990, 3/

"Recalling that the prime objective of the Programme of Action is to arrest the further deterioration in the socio-economic situation of the least developed countries, to reactivate and accelerate their growth and development and to set them on the path of sustained growth and development,

"Noting that while the least developed countries, for their part, have been implementing courageous and far-reaching policy reforms and adjustment measures in line with the Programme of Action, implementation of international support measures and commitments has fallen far short of the provisions of the Programme of Action,

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1/ TD/364, part one, sect. A.

2/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), vol. I: Resolutions Adopted by the Conference, resolution I, annex II.

3/ A/C.2/48/4.

"Expressing serious concern about the continued deterioration in the socio-economic situation of the least developed countries as a whole,

"Also expressing concern about the growing debt stock and debt-service burden of the least developed countries, the shrinking market for their products and the declining flow of development resources,

"Stressing that the mid-term review of the implementation of the Programme of Action provides a unique opportunity for the least developed countries and their development partners to formulate comprehensive corrective measures with a view to enhancing the implementation of the Programme of Action during the rest of the 1990s,

"Taking note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General, 4/

"1. Reaffirms the Paris Declaration and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s;

"2. Calls upon all Governments, international and multilateral organizations, financial institutions and development funds, the organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system and all other organizations concerned to take concrete measures to implement fully the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s as a matter of urgency;

"3. Welcomes the fundamental and far-reaching domestic reforms that have been or are being implemented by the least developed countries;

"4. Strongly urges the international community, in particular the donor countries and organizations, to strengthen the implementation of their commitments in all areas, as set out in the Programme of Action, so as to provide adequate external support to the efforts of the least developed countries, and to keep under review the possibility of implementing further new steps in specific areas of importance to the least developed countries;

"5. Calls upon the donor countries to upwardly adjust the aid targets and commitments contained in the Programme of Action to fully reflect the additional requirements of countries added to the list of the least developed countries following the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries;

"6. Requests the Secretary-General, in conformity with paragraph 142 of the Programme of Action, 5/ to continue to ensure the full mobilization and coordination of all organs, organizations and bodies of the United

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4/ A/48/333.

5/ See Report of the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Paris, 3-14 September 1990 (A/CONF.147/18), part one.

Nations system in the implementation and follow-up of the Programme of Action, in close collaboration with the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the secretariats of the regional commissions and the lead agencies of aid programmes;

"7. Calls upon the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to initiate further innovative measures to mobilize adequate resources for the effective implementation of the Programme of Action;

"8. Stresses the importance of effective follow-up and monitoring mechanisms for the Programme of Action, and notes that the annual follow-up of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action undertaken by the Trade and Development Board on the basis of the annual report on the least developed countries helps contribute to the development dialogue between those countries and their development partners and urges that that exercise be strengthened;

"9. Notes with concern the declining resource position of the United Nations Development Programme during its fifth programming cycle and urges all concerned to take steps to protect the allocation of indicative planning figures to the least developed countries;

"10. Welcomes the initiatives of some developed countries to write off the official debt of the least developed countries and urges others to take similar measures for the full cancellation of the bilateral debt of those countries as well as measures for a substantial reduction or cancellation of their debt stock and debt-service burden owed to multilateral financial institutions and commercial creditors;

"11. Reiterates that increased opportunities for trade can help reactivate economic growth in the least developed countries and calls for unrestricted market access for their products, particularly through the elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers and the granting of special and differential treatment in the context of the Final Act of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations;

"12. Takes note with concern of the environmental and development challenges facing the least developed countries and their vulnerability in this regard and urges development partners to provide those countries with additional resources to enhance their capacity to achieve sustainable development;

"13. Invites the preparatory bodies of all relevant forthcoming major meetings and conferences of the United Nations system to take into account the particular needs and requirements of the least developed countries;

"14. Welcomes the positive contribution of the non-governmental organizations in the least developed countries in the fields of socio-economic development;

"15. Decides to convene a mid-term global review conference on the implementation of the Programme of Action in the early part of September 1995 or any suitable date in the second half of 1995;

"16. Stresses the importance of timely, adequate and thorough preparations for the mid-term global review conference, and accordingly requests the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, in the capacity of Secretary-General of the mid-term global review conference to undertake the necessary preparatory activities, including designating an executive secretary for the conference;

"17. Requests the Trade and Development Board to consider, at its spring session in 1994, the elaboration of the preparatory activities for the mid-term global review conference, including intergovernmental, expert, sectoral and inter-agency preparatory meetings and the substantive documentation;

"18. Urges all Governments and international organizations, including multilateral and bilateral financial and technical assistance institutions, in particular the United Nations Development Programme, to take adequate steps to ensure appropriate preparations for an in-depth mid-term global review of the Programme of Action;

"19. Requests all relevant organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to submit reports containing a review of the implementation of the Programme of Action within their respective fields of competence, with special emphasis on areas where commitments have remained unfulfilled and proposals for corrective measures, as further input to the preparation for the mid-term global review conference;

"20. Stresses the need to maintain the institutional identity and visibility of the Division for the Least Developed Countries in the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, which is entrusted with the task of global monitoring and follow-up of the Programme of Action, and the need to keep under review the resource requirements of the Division in the light of the mid-term global review conference and its follow-up, and welcomes the action taken by the Secretary-General to fill the vacant post of Director of the Division;

"21. Reiterates its request to the Secretary-General, in resolution 46/156, to mobilize extrabudgetary resources to ensure the participation of at least one representative of each least developed country at the spring sessions of the Trade and Development Board, as well as at the preparatory intergovernmental meetings for the mid-term global review conference;

"22. Decides to consider at its forty-ninth session preparations for the mid-term global review conference as well as the question of meeting the cost of full and effective participation of representatives of the least developed countries in that conference;

"23. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session a report on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution."

3. At the 47th meeting, on 10 December, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Leandro Arellano Resendiz (Mexico), introduced a draft resolution (A/C.2/48/L.76), which he submitted on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/48/L.8.

4. The Committee had before it a statement on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/48/L.8, submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly (A/C.2/48/L.20).

5. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/48/L.76 without a vote (see para. 8).

6. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/48/L.76, draft resolution A/C.2/48/L.8 was withdrawn by the sponsors.

7. After the adoption of the draft resolution, the representative of the United States of America made a statement (see A/C.2/48/SR.47).

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE

8. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 45/206 of 21 December 1990, in which it endorsed the Paris Declaration and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, adopted by the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, 46/156 of 19 December 1991 on the implementation of the Programme of Action and 47/173 of 22 December 1992 on the implications of the application of the new criteria for identifying the least developed countries in the implementation of the Programme of Action,

Recalling also its resolutions S-18/3 of 1 May 1990, the annex to which contains the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular the Revitalization of the Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries, and 45/199 of 21 December 1990, the annex to which contains the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, the document entitled "A New Partnership for Development: The Cartagena Commitment", 6/ adopted by the United Nations Conference on Trade and

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6/ TD/364, part one, sect. A.

Development at its eighth session and the texts adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, particularly Agenda 21, 7/

Taking note of the declaration adopted at the Ministerial Meeting of the Least Developed Countries, held at United Nations Headquarters on 30 September 1993, in pursuance of the decision taken at the Ministerial Meeting held at Dhaka in February 1990, 8/

Recalling that the prime objective of the Programme of Action is to arrest the further deterioration in the socio-economic situation of the least developed countries, to reactivate and accelerate their growth and development and to set them on the path of sustained growth and development,

Noting that while many least developed countries, for their part, have been implementing courageous and far-reaching policy reforms and adjustment measures in line with the Programme of Action, implementation of international support measures and commitments by a number of donor countries has fallen short of the provisions of the Programme of Action,

Expressing serious concern about the continued deterioration in the socio-economic situation of the least developed countries as a whole,

Also expressing concern about the heavy debt stock and debt-service burden of the least developed countries, the limited market for their products and the reduced flow of development resources,

Stressing that the mid-term review of the implementation of the Programme of Action provides a unique opportunity for the least developed countries and their development partners to take new measures as necessary, with a view to enhancing the implementation of the Programme of Action during the rest of the 1990s,

Stressing also that the implementation of the Programme of Action provides for a mid-term review that should be organized by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in accordance with paragraph 140 of the Programme of Action, the results of which will be submitted to the General Assembly,

Taking note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General, 9/

1. Reaffirms the Paris Declaration and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s;

7/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), vol. I: Resolutions Adopted by the Conference, resolution I, annex II.

8/ A/C.2/48/4.

9/ A/48/333.

2. Calls upon all Governments, international organizations, multilateral financial institutions and development funds, the organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system and all other organizations concerned to take concrete measures to implement fully the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s as a matter of urgency;

3. Welcomes the fundamental and far-reaching domestic reforms that have been or are being implemented by the least developed countries and notes that such efforts should be continued;

4. Notes the efforts of the international community, in particular the donor countries, to try to fulfil their commitments in all areas, as set out in the Programme of Action, and urges the provision of adequate external support to the efforts of the least developed countries, keeping under review the possibility of implementing further new steps in specific areas of importance to the least developed countries;

5. Calls upon the donor countries to fulfil their aid commitments as contained in the Programme of Action on a priority basis and upwardly adjust them to reflect fully the additional resource requirements of the least developed countries, including those added to the list of least developed countries following the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries;

6. Stresses that progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action will require effective implementation of national policies and priorities by the least developed countries for their economic growth and development, as well as a strong and committed partnership between those countries and their development partners;

7. Requests the Secretary-General, in conformity with paragraph 142 of the Programme of Action, 10/ to continue to ensure the full mobilization and coordination of all organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system in the implementation and follow-up of the Programme of Action, in close collaboration with the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the secretariats of the regional commissions and the lead agencies of aid programmes;

8. Calls upon the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to initiate further innovative measures to provide and mobilize financial and technical support for the effective implementation of the Programme of Action;

9. Stresses the importance of effective follow-up and monitoring mechanisms for the Programme of Action, and notes that the annual follow-up of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action undertaken by the Trade and Development Board on the basis of the annual report on the least developed countries helps contribute to the development dialogue between those

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10/ See Report of the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Paris, 3-14 September 1990 (A/CONF.147/18), part one.

countries and their development partners and urges that that exercise be strengthened;

10. Notes with concern the constrained resource position of the United Nations Development Programme during its fifth programming cycle and its impact on the least developed countries, and urges all concerned to take steps to carry out their agreed development programmes;

11. Welcomes the initiatives of some donor countries to write off and/or reduce as appropriate the official debt of the least developed countries, and invites others to take similar measures;

12. Reiterates that increased opportunities for trade can help reactivate economic growth in the least developed countries, and calls for significantly improved market access for their products, particularly through the elimination, wherever possible, or substantial reduction of tariff and non-tariff barriers, as well as giving special attention to the problems of the least developed countries within the context of the Final Act of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, with a view to integrating them in the global trading system;

13. Takes note with concern of the environmental and development challenges facing the least developed countries and their vulnerability in this regard, and urges development partners to provide those countries with additional resources to enhance their capacity to achieve sustainable development;

14. Invites the preparatory bodies and all relevant forthcoming major meetings and conferences of the United Nations system, particularly the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), to take into account the particular needs and requirements of the least developed countries in formulating their final documents;

15. Welcomes the positive contribution of the non-governmental organizations in the least developed countries in the field of socio-economic development;

16. Decides to convene a high-level intergovernmental meeting to conduct, in accordance with paragraph 140 of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s and its resolution 45/206, a mid-term global review on the implementation of the Programme of Action in the early part of September 1995, or any other suitable date during the second half of 1995;

17. Stresses the importance of timely, adequate and thorough preparations for the mid-term global review;

18. Requests the Trade and Development Board to consider, at its spring session in 1994, the elaboration of the preparatory activities for the mid-term global review conference, including intergovernmental, expert, sectoral and inter-agency preparatory meetings and the substantive documentation;

19. Urges all Governments and international organizations, including multilateral and bilateral financial and technical assistance institutions, in particular the United Nations Development Programme, to take adequate steps to ensure appropriate preparations for an in-depth mid-term global review of the Programme of Action;

20. Requests all relevant organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to submit reports containing a review of the implementation of the Programme of Action within their respective fields of competence, with special emphasis on areas where commitments have remained unfulfilled, and proposals for new measures as necessary, as further inputs to the preparation for the mid-term global review;

21. Stresses the importance of maintaining the institutional identity and visibility of the Division for the Least Developed Countries in the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, which is entrusted with the task of global-level monitoring and follow-up of the Programme of Action, and welcomes the action taken by the Secretary-General to fill the vacant post of Director of the Division;

22. Reiterates its request to the Secretary-General, in resolution 46/156, to mobilize extrabudgetary resources to ensure the participation of at least one representative from each least developed country at the spring sessions of the Trade and Development Board, as well as at the preparatory intergovernmental, expert, sectoral and inter-agency meetings for the mid-term review process;

23. Decides to consider at its forty-ninth session the recommendations of the Trade and Development Board on the preparations for the mid-term global review, as well as the question of meeting the cost of full and effective participation of representatives of the least developed countries in that meeting;

24. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session a report on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution.